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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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LETTERS

If you're still wondering about the photo on the cover of VIA's new PANORAMA brochure, (see last issue) it shows the westbound SUPER CONTINENTAL at Red Pass, B.C., in July, 1981.

The photo was taken by Steve Patterson. It was first published two years ago in my book VIA Rail Canada: The First Five Years. I guess VIA's marketing department liked it too.

Tom Nelligan
Waltham, Massachusetts

After reading the letter of the nameless "Ant Hill Mob" in RTN 293 about the CRESCENT south of Birmingham, I can conclude only that they have been subjected to an excess of insecticide. At the outset, I should say that I support passenger rail service along the Gulf Coast, and I recognize that the CRESCENT's ridership south of Birmingham needs improvement. But, tackling both problems together would be a mistake.

Rail Travel News, Vol. 14, No. 13. 1 July, 1984. Whole number 295. Copyright © 1984 by Message Media. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $19.00 per year; single copy 80¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: James Russell, Editor. Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Jack Ferry, Adron Hall, Kenneth Maylath, Peter Roehm, Ted Scull.

ON THE COVER

The Louisiana World's Fair Daylight, with the famous SP 4449 steam engine, crosses the trestle at Gaviota CA on its return run from the World's Fair, on June 20. At Gaviota Trestle there was the only photo run-by of the Los Angeles to San Francisco portion of the trip. From a color transparency by Gene Hines.

I must point out that the CRESCENT of the '50s and '60s was not an all-sleeper train. Not only does my 1954 Official Guide tell me this, but also I rode a CRESCENT coach from my birthplace, Montgomery, to Mobile as a boy. Furthermore, calling the SOUTHERNER an all-coach train is an error. The same official Guide shows the train's standard autumn consist to include five sleepers. If the SOUTHERNER route or schedule were truly inferior, it wouldn't have survived and we would have the "real" CRESCENT today. Obviously, this did not occur.

Any proposed re-route of the CRESCENT below Atlanta must live with these realities:

(1) The on/off count in Birmingham is heavy. About a million people live in the SMSA there, and they have a modern and ideally situated station. No CRESCENT re-route could exclude Birmingham, which removes the true Atlanta-Montgomery-Mobile-New Orleans route from consideration.

(2) A routing over the ex-L&N HUMMINGBIRD/PAN AMERICAN line from Birmingham to Montgomery, thence to New Orleans would take about 2½ hours longer than the current NS route thru Meridian. If you keep the current schedule north of Atlanta, you would have an absurdly early northbound departure from New Orleans. Any attempt to fiddle with the current schedule north of Atlanta, which today is very attractive, would threaten the ridership that truly justifies the entire train, and the schedule shift would be felt in the NE Corridor. Also, equipment turnaround would be pretty short in New Orleans, and Amtrak might need another trainset to protect the schedule.

(3) The NS GOLDENROD route from Birmingham directly to Mobile is dark and partly Class 3 track. It also bypasses Montgomery, where the state legislature is asked to provide funding. (Admittedly, the Montgomery station was renovated for non-railroad use after the FLORIDIAN was dropped.)

(4) You can't extend the GULF COAST LIMITED to Birmingham without flipping its schedule or making it a sluggish overnight train. I don't imagine that Alabama would rush to supply the additional funding.

(5) You might split the southbound CRESCENT at Birmingham and run part of it down the L&N to Mobile or Biloxi. Whether you would get enough business to justify the additional costs is unclear.

In short, there is no easy way to solve both problems (more Gulf Coast service and low Birmingham-New Orleans ridership on the CRESCENT) with the same train. Each question should be addressed separately, like a GULF WIND from New Orleans to Jacksonville and an extended CRESCENT from New York to Houston or Dallas.

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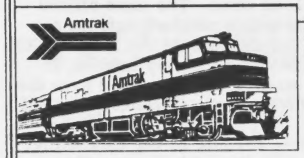

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In the meantime, I suggest that the Mob concentrate on keeping the train it already has (for a while, anyway) and forget gerrymandering the route of a successful long-distance train to fit its own interests.

Chuck Till
Atlanta, Georgia

I enjoyed Glenn Lee's short piece discussing the finer points of that masterpiece of passenger car design—the Skytop observation (RTN 289). It is hard to believe that many RTN readers were not yet born when these beautiful cars (and others like them) were cruising majestically across the American landscape. Mr. Lee's description of the Skytop and 1950s trains in general reminded me again of the difference between train riding in those Glory Days and in the present Amtrak Age. One obvious difference is the boring sameness of Amtrak trains—inside and out. Gone is the style and rich variety that characterized the streamliner of yesteryear—spectacular color schemes, unique and often breathtaking car interiors, distinctive food and drink service, individual menus and uniforms, and so on. I am not saying Amtrak trains are unattractive; they are quite pleasant. It is just that they are all the same, which becomes a bit monotonous after a while.

Another difference which can be more serious is the lack of "non-revenue" space in today's trains. In the Golden Age your "land yacht" might sport two or three dome coaches, a full-length dome lounge, a dome sleeper or two, a secondary cafe-lounge, and of course an observation car. With so many separate "public areas", no single location ever became overcrowded. A comfortable place could always be found, for conversation, cocktails, or simply to quietly contemplate (from a dome is best) that fascinating interplay between train, railroad, and landscape that is the unique essence of rail travel. Today, if you are not in the mood for the often noisy, smoky, "boozy" ambience of the Sightseer lounge, you have no option but to remain trapped in your room. On an Amtrak train the Sightseer is the only non-revenue space on the train! This confinement may be responsible for a vague feeling of restlessness, even boredom, that I have experienced on recent rail journeys.

Thank you, Mr. Lee, for awakening some pleasant and nostalgic memories from a distant and different time.

James E. Cane
San Francisco, California

I appreciated reading about expanded summer train schedules in the New York area (East Coast Report, RTN 293). However, anyone contemplating a Saturday excursion involving the NE Corridor line should be aware of extensive delays due to track work and single-track operation between New York and Newark, NJ.

On June 16 I planned an outing from New York to Philadelphia on Amtrak's 1:30pm COLONIAL or possibly the 2:15pm Washington section of the CRESCENT. The "official" announcements at Penn Station, which to Amtrak's credit were made frequently, stated the possibility of 20- to 30-min delays between New York and Newark (normal running time, 12-16 mins). However, my observations of actual arrival and departure times indicated that the delays were much more extensive—enough to encourage me to postpone my trip to a weekday.

For example, the COLONIAL arrived at Penn Station from Boston on time at 1:16pm, loaded its passengers, and then was held at the platform until 1:50pm (scheduled departure, 1:30pm) while the eastbound CRESCENTS (from Washington, New Orleans) made their way thru the single-track blockade and Hudson River tunnel. These trains arrived over one hour late.

In addition to the fact that Amtrak deceptively played down the extent of the delays, little reliable information was available as to what was really going on. Thus, the person staffing the Amtrak information booth in front of the ticket windows asserted that he received no information about delays because he could not hear the loudspeaker announcements from his location! He directed me to the waiting room where, he said, I'd be able to hear them, or he suggested that I go to the Station Services office. I was somewhat incredulous to hear that he gets no information about delays unless Station Services telephones him specifically about them. This is in spite of the fact that it is the information booth that passengers and people meeting them go to with questions about departures and arrivals; in contrast, Station Services keeps a rather low profile. And the information desk sits right in front of the big Solari board—which is only occasionally up to date.

Having just returned from three weeks of train travel in Europe—including Italy, where delays are now common—I was dismayed that Amtrak's management of scheduling and information at America's busiest railroad station left much to be desired.

As a footnote, neither Amtrak nor NJ Transit made any effort to advise Newark-bound passenters that an alternative rail service from Manhattan via PATH trains existed. The latter would have been less than half as expensive, and considering the delays, certainly a lot faster as well.

Vincent Mazzola
New York, New York

Rail passenger interests in the Providence area are amazed to read in RTN 291 that the Providence Foundation won a USDOT Historic Preservation Award for "successful" coordination of railway, highway and transit improvements in Providence. In reality, the project is the removal of railroad passenger facilities to a new, less functional location more than a quarter mile walking distance further away from downtown Providence and all intercity and local buses. Perhaps this is the only project in the country to destroy intermodal facilities. In reality, the Providence Foundation is an organization devoted entirely to speculative real estate interests and businessmen interested in improving auto access to already congested downtown Providence, and their entire project has shwon not the slightest concern for railroad passengers. And rather than preserving historic Union Station, the building itself will be in jeopardy once the railroad station function for which it is designed is eliminated.

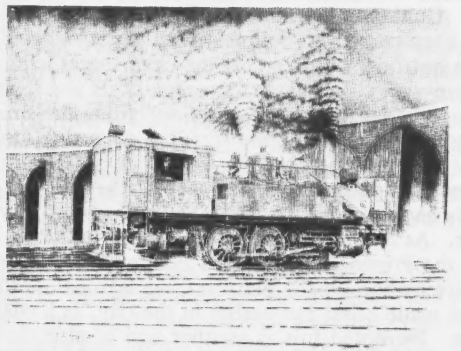
Indeed, because this project used NE Corridor funds that were supposed to be used for rail improvement, Ecology Action for Rhode Island, the RI Association of RR Passengers and NARP filed suit in Federal District Court to stop this. More information about this matter can be obtained by writing to Ecology Action at 189 Mathewson St, Providence RI 02903.

Barry Schiller, Chairman
Transportation Committee
Ecology Action
Providence, Rhode Island

...It is quite obvious that Amtrak's Marketing Department cannot predict ridership with any degree of accuracy. The New England Metroliners, AUTO TRAIN, GULF COAST LIMITED and RIVER CITIES are all prime examples of the worthlessness of Marketing's computerized methods for projecting demand for its services. Furthermore, the Marketing Dept. seems unable to react to ridership trends by expanding consists/frequencies to accommodate ridership growth (as on the EAGLE), or in reducing fares/changing promotional strategies to increase low ridership. The fact that Graham Claytor permits Amtrak's Marketing Dept. to continue making such blunders shows a lack of competency on his part.

Name withheld
Missouri

It is a below zero, misty morning in 1954 at the 48-stall Shoreham roundhouse in Minneapolis. This Centennial limited edition print by illustrator Philip Sularz depicts an awakened Soo Line 0-6-0T X-90 as she prepares to do battle against the bitter Minnesota cold and groaning iron. The escaping exhaust and heavy flange squeal noisily demonstrate the X-90's active role in work service at Shoreham shops. But it is late and her future has few tomorrows. Limited edition prints are available in two sizes: 14 x17 - $15.00 ea. and 17 x20 - $25.00 ea. with a clear margin. Prints are signed, numbered, titled (Winter Goat) and printed on 65 lb. Navajo Cover. Prints are mailed in a sturdy tube with history sheet. Please include $2.00 for postage and handling. Make check or money order to:



PHILIP SULARZ 17 Narragansett Avenue, Jamestown, RI 02835

RAIL CANADA

THE FIRST PANORAMA EXPERIENCE

BY ROBERT W. RYNERSON

On June 3 the sun set in Edmonton at 9:55pm MDT, but faces at the CN Tower Station were still bright in the half hour following. It was time for the first eastbound run of VIA Rail's PANORAMA. Early in the day, an eastbound edition of train 4 had left Saskatoon for Winnipeg, covering the new schedule with the unlamented "intercity" equipment of the last train 109. But now it was time for Edmonton's reunion with the East.

Since the Nov 1981 "Pepin" cutbacks, Edmonton (Alberta's capital and second largest city) had been connected to the eastern part of the rail network by a hodgepodge of Yellow Cab vans, Dayliners with no baggage service, or overnight layovers in Saskatoon (at a station miles from hotels). Only a Transport Minister linked to the intercity bus industry could keep a straight face and refer to the results as a "system".

Now, a real passenger train was sitting in a real train station, waiting to head toward real cities to benefit real people. The train looked familiar to the two dozen spectators who gathered in spite of the gates, fences and pedestrian tunnels. It was train 10, the SKEENA, of the day before: engine 6506, baggage 9488, coach 5514, diner-lounge 764, and sleeper "Elmsdale". This equipment was to be returned to VIA's Winnipeg base, while the first true PANORAMA trainset traveled west as train 3 of June 3.

Provisions for 764 were being loaded as we climbed aboard for a look at this writer's favorite part of the train. Bryant Gunhouse, VIA's Manager-Operations, for the West, was on hand, checking last-minute details. He explained that the PANORAMA will carry the same menu items as the CANADIAN. The diner-lounge on this run was staffed by a Barman, Chef and Steward. A Waiter would join the crew on peak traffic days.

A full breakfast costs $4.50 and features scrambled eggs, pork sausage, bacon strips, potatoes, toast and coffee, tea or milk. A typical luncheon menu, for a tariff $6.50, features a hot meat sandwich with salad, soup, mashed potatoes, vegetables, and coffee, tea or milk. Dinner items are similarly sold on the full meal basis, for $9.00. Pot roast of beef was on the menu we pulled out to check.

Gunhouse led me thru the train to his "office" in "Elmsdale", which he was using to keep passengers supplied with green-and-gold PANORAMA buttons. In addition to the buttons, whose colors matched the brochures and posters prepared for this service, there were "first day" souvenir tickets and "welcome aboard" flyers. "Elmsdale" was properly set up for the night, including the small signs directing passengers to the dining car forward. At the rear, the departing sunlight was turning the sky a pale blue.

Frank Milner, a 38-year veteran of CN railroading, was hoping to sign on the daytime Edmonton-Jasper segment of the run, but he didn't have enough seniority. So he's back to working nights, but pleased to have a train that means something to people. As Milner welcomed passengers, he was recorded on film by Dr. Brian Sullivan of the Province of Alberta's Economic Development Department. In the circles of conversation on the platform, we learned another detail of the transition: Train 103 had made a last run earlier in the day, as a passenger extra from Saskatoon to Edmonton. We noted this as another sign of attention to detail that showed more enthusiasm than in Nov 1981. The inaugural run for the SKEENA was delayed because no one had prepared train orders for it.

Passengers streamed from the head of the escalator and were sorted by accommodation. The English voice (P.R. Rep Mike Williams) and then the French voice, echoed from the wall of the Tower to the Women's Hostel across the tracks. Conductor Milner, with professional impartiality, asked a well-dressed couple in their sixties what car number they were booked for. They were not planning on a night ride in the 76-seat coach, but the whole transaction was carried on as seriously as if the train behind the conductor had been an 18-car SUPER CONTINENTAL. They were politely directed to "Elmsdale".

It was getting chilly by the time the message from "down under" at the ticket counters came squawking over the PR system: "Train 4, cleared to go".

Frank Milner took a look around and waited for some last goodbyes.

When he gave the highball, and the engineer responded on the air horn, some cynic might have pointed out that there really was not anything to see here. The train began to roll, the train baggage messenger waved as he passed, coach passengers waved, the barman opened for business, and in the sleeper, passengers were absorbed in their own worlds. This was not very extraordinary, we would have to agree with the cynic. But what was extraordinary was that from Nov 15, 1981 thru Jun 2, 1984 these things did not happen.

Straining to follow the speed-gaining train, we pinned our eyes on the last illuminated window. In the clean white surroundings of the made-up lower berth, we saw a mother preparing her toddler for bed.

TORONTO-TO-OTTAWA LRC train derailed in Nepean at 10:45pm on June 21. A switch had been sabotaged, sending the one-engine, four-car train onto a spur line and causing it to collide with a flat car. The train was traveling at 80km per hour, and 27 people received minor injuries. The engineer was not alerted to the improperly set switch until it was too late to stop, because the switch is marked only by a reflector. Officials told newsmen that that portion of the CN line does not have enough traffic—6 trains per day—to warrant an automatic warning device. Heavily damaged was the $2 million LRC locomotive, with some damage also to passenger cars. There were 85 passengers aboard the train, which tore up over 60 meters of track in the accident.

SENATE TRANSPORT COMMITTEE in late June issued a report which recommends that VIA Rail be given authority to establish contracts with the railways similar to those Amtrak uses, saving it $25-35 million per year. Transport Minister Axworthy said he will soon announce means by which VIA could move toward doing this, altho legislation can't be passed until Parliament reconvenes in the fall.

RESTORING THE ATLANTIC is a prime objective of many in the Maritime Provinces, and a group of communities there in mid-June telegramed Liberal leader John Turner to ask him to restore the train if he becomes Prime Minister. The train was discontinued in 1981 as part of the Pepin cutbacks.

LE TORTILLARD, the new Quebec City-Pointe-au-Pic (Murray Bay) passenger train, sponsored by a non-profit organization called "Le Tortillard du St-Laurent", already has met a great deal of success, Transport 2000 President Guy Chartrand said in a Jun 22 announcement. So far, over 14,000 persons reserved tickets for the scenic trips along the shore of the St. Lawrence River. The expectation is that 50,000 passengers will be carried during the summer. The train runs thru Sep 3. For reservations or information, call Le Tortillard du St-Laurent, 1125 de la Canardiere, Quebec City, Que., GIS 2C3, at (418) 648-1566. The Jun 21 inaugural trip carried over 650 passengers.

EDMONTON-CALGARY EQUIPMENT POOL has been assigned RDC 6205, which appeared on train 196 on Jun 10. It has 44 seats in "no smoking" and eight seats in "smoking", and is equipped with a snack bar. RDC2's were the type of equipment used by CP on that run before and during the early day s of VIA. With inauguration of direct service to the East via Winnipeg, ridership on195/196 is down. These trains still carry connecting traffic, however, for intermediate points.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II and Prince Phillip will be carried in a special train July 17 from Cornwall to Kingston.

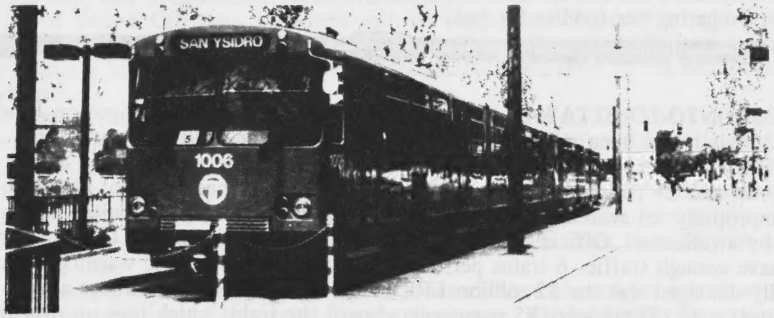
THE CANADIAN NATIONAL has received permission from the CTC to abandon its line from Clarenville to Bonavista. The wednesday-only mixed train would disappear. It was claimed that the passenger train lost $38,000 in 1982 and the line lost $865,000.

THE SKYLINE DOMES have begun running in reverse direction from what has been the norm since their construction, thereby putting the lounge section in the front of the car. VIA has reversed seats in the dome, and a table has been installed on each side of the dome aisle at what is the new front of the dome section.

A SPECIAL TIMETABLE for Canadian services has been issued by Amtrak.

OTTAWA-TORONTO OVERNIGHT rail passenger service will continue beyond Aug 1 and the CTC will hold public hearings on the proposed discontinuance. The agency was reportedly flooded with letters of protest.....

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT



SAN DIEGO TROLLEY is expected to receive $3 million in federal funds for starting its East Line. Photo by Alex Mayes, at San Ysidro station.

JULY 1 FARE INCREASES: Washington Metro fares went up by at least five cents, over many protests. Golden Gate Transit increased fares on buses and ferries and reduced service somewhat.

BUFFALO'S TRANSIT SYSTEM is using a graffiti-resistant stainless steel surface developed by Rigidized Metals Corporation of Buffalo.

LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL was the subject of a major series of six front-page articles in the L.A. Times starting July 1, written by staff writer William Trombley. The series emphasizes the negative, ending by suggesting that light rail lines or more buses would be better solutions to L.A. growing traffic problems. The paper commissioned a private consultant, James McLynn of Bethesda MD, to examine Metro Rail's ridership projections, and he found them to be overstated by 20% or more. In other Metro Rail news, the L.A. City Council on Jun 27 failed to back a bid by Councilman John Ferraro to drop the subway plan and substitute light rail.

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE on Jun 28 approved $119.4 million for Los Angeles Metro Rail, following the House's lead, an amount far less than that requested by Los Angeles. In other news, Metro Rail backers have negotiated a pact with labor leaders that would ban strikes during construction of the system.

NEW YORK STATE judge on July 6 awarded $275 each to nine commuters on Conrail (now Metro North) who had sued over poor conditions on their Hartsdale-Scarsdale to New York trains. The complaints dated from the summer of 1982.

WALL STREET JOURNAL'S front page of June 26 carried an article on San Francisco's cable cars which went into detail about Muni problems hidden behind the shiny facade of the system. Writer Ken Wells said the Muni "has just gone through an accident-plagued, disastrous year that has shaken rider confidence, put transit officials on the political hot seat and prompted the hiring of a public-relations consultant to rehabilitate the system's image."

Cape Cod Returns

BY PETE ROEHM

Saturday, June 30, 25 years from the day that it terminated, service was restored from the Boston area to Buzzards Bay, Falmouth and Hyannis. At just past 9am, Cape Cod & Hyannis engine 1210 (ex-NH geep) left with its entourage of olive green and gold-trimmed coaches and parlor car bearing 55 revenue passengers in the former and a sold-out charter in the latter, originally PRR's "Camden," and later Adirondack's "The Enterprise."

Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis had christened the new SPIRIT OF MASSACHUSETTS the day before at an inauguration ceremony at South Braintree, from where a couple of hundred dignitaries from politics, transportation and the media made a roundtrip to Buzzards Bay and return. Dukakis had remarked at the gathering that the worst thing the Commonwealth had done in the '50's was to abandon the Old Colony rail lines into southeastern Massachusetts. Now, hundreds of millions of dollars later, there is a single route extension of the inadequate Red Line transit line as far as South Braintree and the new attempts by the CC&H to interest people in traveling to the Cape by rail.

The new service runs daily thru Oct 28, departing South Braintree's Red Line terminal at 9am seven days a week to Hyannis and all days but Tuesday and Wednesday to Falmouth. A 6pm train runs to Hyannis on Fridays and to Falmouth on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays. A 9pm train runs to Hyannis Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. The time to Buzzards Bay is about 1:20, to Falmouth 2:15, and to Hyannis 2:20. The fare structure is zoned, but Buzzards Bay, Falmouth and Hyannis all fall into Zone 3, which is $8 one say, and there is a $15 one-day roundtrip. A 10-trip ticket is also available for $72. In addition, there are commuter ticket books from all zones, but in Zone 3 only good from Buzzards Bay.

Passengers reach the CC&H trains by taking the Red Line from Harvard Square thru Boston and at South Station to South Braintree (fare is $1.20; pay 60 cents when boarding and 60 cents when leaving). At the latter point, one goes downstairs and thru the turnstiles to the CC&H ticket booth; then up an escalator and out onto a new wood platform adjacent to the Conrail offices. Besides the mid-afternoon return trip, there are frequent buses from Hyannis via Plymouth & Brockton Street Railway (depot across from CC&H) to South Station, or one can fly Provincetown-Boston Airline to Logan and connect with subways. The train service is something of a test during the 2-year Southeast Expressway construction, and there is no guarantee it will last.

The World's Fair and Return

BACK TO SAN DIEGO VIA CHICAGO AND DENVER

BY WALT STRINGER

Saturday, June 2 was arrival day at the Louisiana World's Fair for the 4449 steam train. That day I chased the train from the Huey Long Bridge to the fair site. The train was late, crossing the bridge at 12:45pm and then slowly running ICG and NOPB waterfront trackage along the levee.

Arrival at the Fair site was 2:05pm, with a small crowd in attendance—several Disney-type characters and a military band were official greeters. The place was hard to find, and few other railfans were there. UP's special train of UP and MP business cars (including a dome) was behind a fence nearby. The 4449 crew looked very glad to be there after their long trek.

That night, while at the Fair, I found 4449, sans train, simmering quietly next to the space shuttle Enterprise, at the U.S. pavilion. The UP system pavilion, with an isolated 8444 outside, has a rousing movie!

Sunday morning I made the traditional round trip on the St. Charles streetcar line, enjoying the scenery and morning breeze. Sunday night I took a trip out to Mobile on train 24, the GULF COAST LIMITED. Certainly one of Amtrak's success stories, this train runs heavy on Amfleet and passengers, with interesting Gulf scenery to boot. Consist of the train was P30 engine 718, coaches 21229, 21150, 21175, cafe 20013, 25088, 25047, and non-working cafe 20011.

We left on time with about 300 on board. The L&N crew from Mobile was very helpful in pointing out the East Junction (near the unusual raised tombstone cemetary along I-10), then the Southern-L&N interchange, then NE Tower at 6:53, where the CRESCENT route heads toward Lake Pontchartrain. We passed Gentilly Yard just before stopping at the gazebo-like wooden East New Orleans stop along old U.S. 90 at 7pm. After that, we crossed a long bayou with bridges and had to saw by a huge L&N freight westbound, causing us to arrive Waveland (a small station and one vestibule platform) 5 mins late.

I spent about 30 mins in line in the Amcafe getting dinner—two attendants were working, while a third occasionally ran supplies. These attendants were from the Chicago pool, working trains 59-24-23-58 for their lounge run. At 7:55 we crossed Bay St. Louis on a long bridge, which I remembered from a steam trip during the NRHS New Orleans convention about 10 years ago—at which time I had stood on the beach next to Graham Claytor, talking trains and taking pictures of 4501 (or was it 722-750?), their first time on L&N.

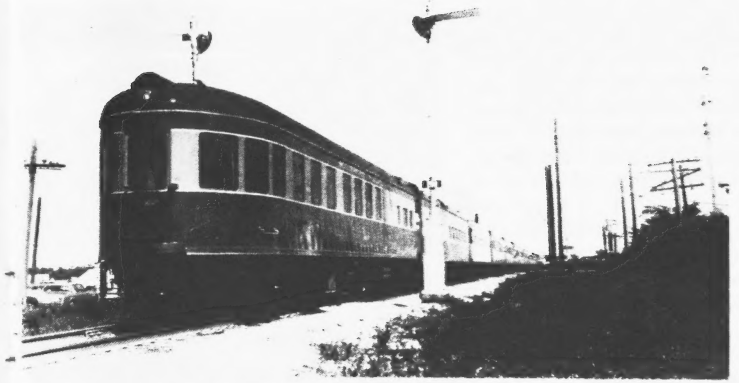
Occasionally we saw the beach and shorefront homes, and a rider noted that this area was largely man-made land and very hurricane-prone. That remark reminded me of my drive from Houston to Galveston two days earlier, where I noted hurricane damage and seawalls, as well as Galveston's excellent rail museum in the old GC&SF station.

We arrived at the old red-brick Gulfport station at 8:19, finally leaving the 30mph beach area with so many grade crossings. Gulfport has an IC crossing right at the depot, and patronage here was healthier than at East New Orleans or Waveland. Biloxi was next at 8:43, with its platform next to a fenced-off green depot. It was dark now, but the rear three cars, handling the Mobile passengers, were in good spirits.

Pascagoula drawbridge and station came and went at 9:15, and after a fast run thru the woods, we arrived at the functional modern depot on the waterfront in Mobile at 9:56, a bit early. I walked across the street and secured a room in Stouffer's Riverview Plaza for $45—other places up the street run from $30 to $50. From my room I saw the equipment leave at 10:15 to be wyed, heard 2 or 3 long freights overnight, and the GULF COAST LIMITED returned at 6:15am for loading.

Again, due to short platforms, only 1-3 cars can be used per station, and the crew had set up the short-distance Amcoaches at the platform, leaving the long distance coaches empty. The longest riders thus got the short shrift.

We left Mobile on time and remained



The World's Fair Daylight in Texas: at Satsuma TX, on the outskirts of Houston, running Dallas-Houston on May 31. Photo by Alex Mayes.

so all the way, backing into New Orleans at 10:30am with about 250 riders (about five got off at East N.O., with 2 on). I got to see Pascagoula in daylight—the huge shipyards are in the distance, and the depot is large, wooden, and painted green and white. Mobile is a decent-looking city too, tho the dock area is typical workhorse waterfront.

I left New Orleans Monday, June 4, on train 58, the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, bound for Memphis. Our large and busy train had engines 330 and 294, and cars 1209, 25111, 4740, 28012, dome 9408, 25095, 25046, 2454 "Redwood Grove", 8503, 2997 "Pine Ridge", dome 9411, and 2989 "Pine Fern". The last two cars were the RIVER CITIES to St. Louis and Kansas City.

After securing a seat in 4740, I went to the baggage car to reclaim my suitcase (It's very difficult to get a locker in the combined Amtrak-Greyhound depot, so the baggage-check process can be very helpful.) Interestingly, mail and baggage in New Orleans are worked on a special track, with the NOUPT switcher adding and cutting the cars from the main train.

Train 58-358 boarded over 200 riders and left on time. I headed for dome 9408, only to find akids' group having exclusive use of the car. As the conductor was asking me to leave, I was complaining about the dome being a non-reserved open area, and he said he was short a coach, and that was that (the windows on 9408 were grubby up front anyway, yet relatively clear to the rear). I retreated to the rear dome 9411, to find more opaque front windows, but relatively clear rear ones. (The high-back seats are another issue!) Side windows were pretty much okay. The brakeman admonished me not to be in this car when it was cut at Centralia (14 hours away and beyond my ticket).

After rolling thru western New Orleans, by the airport, then out along the Pontchartrain swampline, the ICG rolled this train consistently fast, close to 80 on good, but far from perfect, track. It's mostly double track thru wooded areas with few curves, and just about every station is a red-brick, 2-story structure. Riders boarded at every stop, some with cash fares in hand. This train isn't nicknamed the "catfish" or "chicken-bone" for nothing.

Jackson provided the only rest stop—about 10 minutes on the above-street level platforms. McComb is a good spot for railfans, as quite a bit of motive power ties up here.

Dinner was on the reservation system, and the lounge was always busy. First class patrons didn't get their packet of amenities due to lack of stock, but the food and drink items were provided. The slumbercoach was protected by a substitute roomette-bedroom car also. Dinner for me was the chicken—okay—with tasteless veggies. This train, like most, didn't have the pork entree. Service was a bit slow, and at my table, silverware wasn't provided until after dinner was served. We were also given the usual recitation of out-of-stock items. I later heard that the diner was behind schedule on reservations. I slumbered for several hours, and we pulled into Memphis at 11:49 (early), and the depot and platforms are still a disaster area in a bad part of town. The station is open days and nights now, and taxis are still hard to find. I taxied finally to the airport and took the Federal Express

Superhub tour, a fascinating look at their intense 3-hour, 200,000+ package sorting. Their fleet of planes arrives from all over the U.S. by 1:00am and are gone by 4am. If you are a student of logistics, take this tour some day!

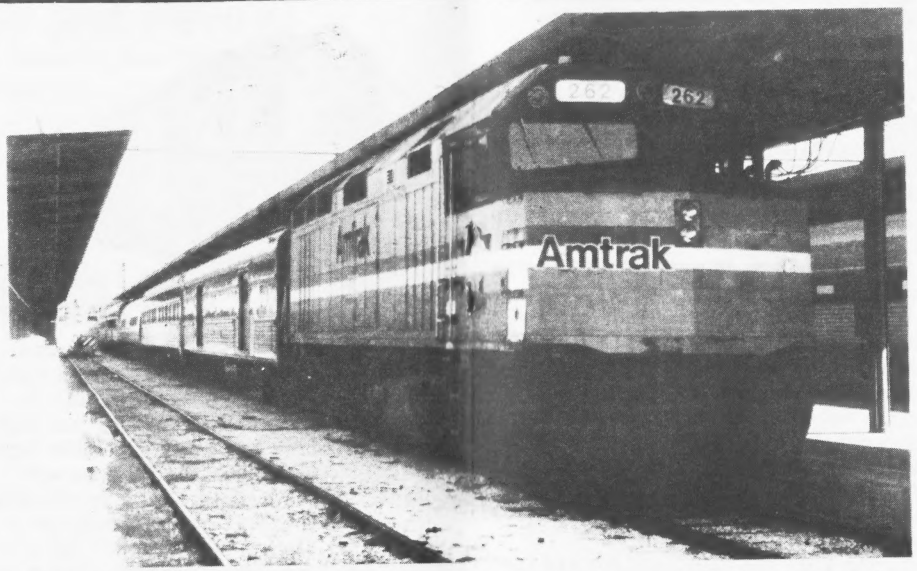
Also in Memphis I toured Graceland, Sun Studios, walked Mud Island (access by monorail), and checked out Beale St. The ICG passenger main was right along the riverfront, with occasional freights.

Tuesday night I was back at Amtrak by 10pm awaiting an on-time train 58—this time I was going to Kansas City on 358, the RIVER CITIES. The consist of the train was engines 327 and 289, and cars 1217, 1229, 4623, 28018, dome 9400, 4649, 25073, 4002, 8508, 2056, 2911, 2920, and dome 9410 (last two cars to Kansas City). As with the previous night, there were no sleeper and a handful of coach riders to Missouri.

Unfortunately, a problem arose immediately. Superliner diner 38015, set off no. 58 several days earlier due to a hotbox, was to be added ahead of the baggage cars, deadheading to Chicago. A 75-min delay ensued, as the crew had HEP connection trouble. I heard the air test out at 12:05am, but it took until 1:15am to get the HEP going and departure occurred. Once again, the difficulty that remote railroad crews have with HEP was seen.

When I awoke, we were at Carbondale at 5:50, in front of Amtrak's spacious new brick depot. Coach 21154 was sitting in the center track to be added to our train. There was a lengthy delay in adding this car, and we left at 6:36am—two hours down, solely due to switching. While in the depot, I learned (as suspected) that our Kansas City cars would be annulled at St. Louis, with a bus running beyond there, due to alteness. (Why hold the St. Louis-K.C. train—with its short turn in K.C.—for two hours just for 5 passengers?) The one attendant—who handles the sleeper and coach—was happy at the extra layover time allowed, as she works Chicago-N.O.—K.C.—N.O.—Chicago; apparently the cars and attendants turn at K.C. the same day.

Before Centralia I enjoyed a pancake breakfast for $3. Centralia has a huge brick depot set back from the main line,



Northbound CITY OF NEW ORLEANS prepares to leave New Orleans Mar 25. Jack Ferry photo.

and just south of it is the SR's St. Louis-Danville line crossing from SE to NW, double-tracked across from the depot are 5-6 tracks, from east to west ICG, interchange, and SR. We stopped south of the depot at 7:25am, and an ICG truck flew up to the cut point several minutes later, to make the cut at 7:33. No. 58 then pulled ahead while engine 370 backed over from the interchange crossover to couple on at 7:42. At 7:46 we pulled ahead to the small new concrete 2-car platform to await the crew after lining switches. Then we lined more switches to get over to the SR, which actually uses BN briefly near the yard.

Departing the platform at 7:50am, we cleared yard limits soon and rolled west on a nice single-track line thru the farmlands. There were plenty of curves, and speed was 60-70, with the SR dispatcher in Louisville KY giving us green lights. The attendant served all of us free coffee and rolls (normally sleeper fare), and the 2-man SR crew sat in the dome providing commentary on places like Posey (8:07am), Albers (8:22), Scott AFB (8:35), and Belleville (8:40), a possible new station.

At 8:50 the ICG Du Quoin-Carbondale line joined us from the south side. Amtrak looked at this line, but the ICG wanted big bucks to repair it. The part I saw looked to be in good shape. At 8:53 we stopped to handthrow a switch and go in the hole for SR eastbound freight III. At 9:08 we made a left turn at A&S Junction, crossed over two tracks, then a right turn and passed the A&S yard. By 9:20 we were ascending the MacArthur Bridge, and at 9:27 we arrived at the temporary St. Louis trailer-station, 2-3 blocks east of the old depot, a straight line move.

After arrival, the few Missouri riders were sent on, and I was issued an exchange ticket to Chicago, since I didn't want a bus ride. I also asked to change my booking on train 5 by one day, but the computer showed no. 5 totally full. Later, Arrow found me a last-minute seat for June 7.

The Southern conductor kindly drove me over to the Gateway Arch, noting that his job works seven days per week, his crew base is Princeton IN, and he gets a day off from his St. Louis-Centralia circuit only by "laying off." At the Arch I was delighted to find the Olympic Torch Relay about to arrive. Wilma Rudolph, in 1960 the Olympic 100-meter dash winner, would hand the torch to Ozzie Smith, a Cardinal baseball player. The Arch itself was interesting, with a unique transportation conveyance inside the curving arch to move people. After photographing the STATE HOUSE going under the Arch along the Mississippi, I returned to the depot on foot, about 20 blocks. The STATE HOUSE had this consist: engine 219, and car 21023, 20231, 21146. My ANN RUTLEDGE to Chicago (from Kansas City) had 239 and 20217, 21830, 21816, and 21835. There were a bunch of thru passengers on 304, and a station hand was busy washing both trains several times. The RIVER CITIES had also been turned and cleaned, except for the dome windows (boy, did they need it!).

About 35 boarded and we left on time for the flat and very fast run thru Illinois. We climbed onto an elevated track, rounded an elevated wye, then parallelled the river north until crossing it at 3:45. There was a veritable spaghetti plate of rail lines on the east bank, and we eased thru Granite City Junction at 3:50, to get on the old GM&O to Chicago. Then we passed Wood River, Lenox, and Wann Towers, arriving the red brick Alton depot at 4:09. Next stop was Springfield, with the state capitol visible a half-mile south of the depot. Passengers from this large brick station nearly filled the train—definitely the biggest stop on the run. The Amdinette became busier as we passed Lincoln on time (station is a restaurant) and then Bloomington, with its large old rail office building. We passed Normal, where a weekend stop for Illinois State University is in the timetable, and then met the Amfleet EAGLE in the hole above Pontiac.

From the back vestibule I clocked us at 80 on this arrow-straight line as we rolled for Joliet on time, 45 people to get off there. Above Joliet we saw the decaying and vandalized French Turboliners at Brighton Park yard, stopped at ICG's Forest View yard to drop a freight crew, and noted the equipment in Amtrak's Chicago coach yard before arriving 20mins early at Chicago Union Station at 8:20pm. The station was quiet, and I headed for the hotel, after finding that tomorrow's train 5 was still sold out.

Next morning the 800-USA-RAIL number got me a seat on no. 5, and I used the

Michigan Avenue ticket office to have my coupon stickered. I taxied to Union Station to catch the final train of this part of my trip, train 5 of June 7, the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR. The south boarding area was a madhouse, and passengers for no. 5 were in one mob, while no. 7 was boarding on the south end of the thru track, creating another crowd. The BN conductor was checking in sleeper passengers, and at 2:15 we were sent down to the train 25 people at a time, with instructions on how to find your car for your city (basically, ask each attendant). The consist was engines 333 and 323; cars 1183, 1143, 39917, 31025, 34092, 34070, 33004, 38029, 32054, 34028, 32037, 34047, and 32028. The last four cars were for L.A. and Seattle, front to rear. There was only one sleeper to Oakland, and the train was quite full. As we lurched out at 2:41, I noted train 7 on the next track with training car 10401 and three Amfleet cars on the rear.

We overtook the 2:30pm Aurora local at Congress Park and ran the center track all the way, leaving Aurora on the schedule time. We passed no. 6 at speed about 10mins later, and the track to Galesburg was fast and smooth, for a 5:10 arrival. Preparations for Railroad Days that weekend were evident. We crossed the Mississippi River and arrived Burlington early, for a crew change (train crew to Lincoln, engine crew to Ottumwa, then Creston, then Lincoln).

I chose a 6pm dinner reservation, and noted that the lounge (staffed upstairs and down) was constantly busy. The new train chief was busy and helpful, and attempted to enforce smoking regulations in the Superliner lounge with mixed success. Dinner was on time, and the crew was pretty nice, but once again there was no pork, on the first night out! I had trout (which was dry) with baked potato and vegetables for $7. As usual, dessert saved the meal.

West of Ottumwa there were violent thunderstorms, and I noted a recent freight derailment at the Des Moines River Bridge, with a 10mph slow order. My coach 34070 was a rough rider—the springs and/or shocks were not doing their job. BN track was also on the rough side, but we kept going 70-80 steadily. When I awoke we were 10mins late at Ft. Morgan, the Rockies just visible in the west.

It had been tough to sleep—I had a broken legrest (no other seats to change to), the car was either too cool or too hot (depending on who was griping), and the rough ride didn't help. There was a beautiful priarie sunrise around 5:30, and the diner and lounge were jammed when they opened at 6:30. I had the eggs/ham/toast/juice/coffee item for $4.25—very nicely done. At 7am we pulled up to the BN yard and stopped sitting there for 10 mins awaiting who knows what. After a 13-min maneuver we were around the wye and backed into Denver Union Station.

Over 100 riders had already checked in with the crew and were in line, and there was Mr. Bernstein, still meeting the train on a daily basis—always a pleasure to say hello and chat for a few minutes. He verified that car "Silver Sky" is still intact and runnable, and commented that Amtrak is not very interested in the Colorado local markets due to fare increases and lack of local equipment.

The train was fueled and stocked (no extra power or cars added this June 8). We left on time at 8:10, only to be stabbed 10mins at the BN crossing. No scenery announcements or delay announcements were made on the ZEPHYR, but the PA was well-used for diner and lounge information.

Finally we began the ascent of the Front Range, on a beautiful, clear morning. We met coal drags at Cliff and Rocky, and reached the Moffat Tunnel at 10:08. We stopped at Granby at 10:52 —no sign of a Winter Park depot, but there was still plenty of snow in the mountains. At 12:16 we rolled by Bond —no more engine crew change; entire crew goes Denver-Grand Junction. In the Gore and Byer Canyon areas we ran thru a snow shower and saw evidence of recent slides. Passing Dotsero at 1:12, we found extremely high water in the Colorado River in Glenwood Canyon, and noted much construction activity on Interstate 70. Track was good, but the two engines were having trouble with 13 cars keeping the schedule. A D&RGW man in Denver had said that if 14 or more cars are run, a third unit also runs.

Our stop at Glenwood, after a freight meet, saw over 100 off and took until 1:53, and we were off thru ran and clouds along the very flooded Colorado River.

(continued on page 18)

THE PERE MARQUETTE, the new Chicago-Grand Rapids 403-b train, will begin operation on Aug 5. The route has been without passenger service since Amtrak took over 13 years ago.....

CAPE COD SERVICE began June 30, linking Boston with that recreation area for the first time in 25 years. Trains leave the MBTA's South Braintree station twice daily, with one running to Buzzards Bay and one to Hyannis. Trains will run thru Oct 28. For information, contact the Cape Cod & Hyannis Railroad, PO Box 57, Hyannis MA 02601, telephone 617-771-1145.....

120 MPH OPERATION has been approved for 75 more miles of NE Corridor line, with FRA Administrator Riley giving the okay in early July.....

★★★

SENATE AND HOUSE are not in agreement on their respective transportation appropriation bills, with the House considering $738 million for Amtrak, $54 million of which is for NE Corridor improvements. The Senate in committee has approved $700 million for Amtrak for Fiscal 85, plus $10 million for the NEC. It also has earmarked $15 million for the St. Louis light rail project and $3 million for the San Diego Trolley East Line. NARP said it is pushing for the higher House figure, but wants the Senate language earmarking funds for the two transit projects. Congress has adjourned and will return July 23.....

GULF COAST LIMITED is a "great success story", according to Amtrak's New Orleans district manager Gene Price. He told a New Orleans reporter, "We're tickled to death." Ridership is four times as high as Amtrak's marketing people had predicted. On June 16, train 23 arrived in New Orleans with 548 passengers, and train 24 departed with 516, for a one-day total of 1064. That day the train was running 10 cars. The consist of train 23 was: engines 712 & 718; cars 21175, 25088, 20011, 21229, 25111, 21150, 20013, 4642, 4724, and 25047. Amtrak said that 50-60% of detraining passengers in New Orleans ride a local transit shuttle to the Fair. About 20% of passengers do not ride as far as New Orleans. The Amtrak train may be more successful than the Fair itself. The Louisiana legislature gave the Fair a $17.5 million loan in late June, the second such loan in three months. The Fair runs thru Nov 11...

★★★

THE CHARLOTTE SECTION of the PALMETTO received funding approval from the North Caroline legislature on Jun 28, and officials are hoping for an Oct 28 startup of the train. The train will branch off the PALMETTO at Richmond VA, running on Seaboard tracks to Raleigh NC, and then on Southern Railway to Charlotte NC. The full state General Assembly has yet to approve the use of the funds, according to reports. The amount in question is $500,000. The train is to be named the PIEDMONT CRESCENT.....

AMTRAK PRESIDENT CLAYTOR has written the following response to an item in RTN 293: "A brief article in the June issue of your publication credited Mr. Kevin Gregoire with an inaccurate and misleading characterization of the maintenance situation in the Tampa, Florida area. Amtrak has not stopped equipment maintenance at Tampa; rather, it has continued turnaround maintenance there since it assumed control on February 1, 1984. The Tampa facility does not have a 'makeshift maintenance area.' Since assumption of activities there, Amtrak has invested approximately $1 million in the facility, including the installation of jacking pads, drop tab-

les, and 480 volt power supply. The facility is now capable of performing all existing maintenance functions. In addition, further improvements are scheduled, including the installation of an automatic car washer and building construction to further enhance equipment cleanliness. You make the statement that 'workers at Tampa have charged that unsafe cars are being sent from there, as they are maintained only in New York, now.' While I cannot be certain what individual workers may have charged, I assure you thaa the allegation is untrue. Interviews with a cross-section of labor and management employees at Tampa, and review of maintenance records, confirmed that all cars are safely dispatched daily between Tampa and New York. Cars are assigned to New York for regularly scheduled preventive maintenance programs but continue to receive daily turnaround maintenance based on specific checks and procedures at both endpoints."..... ★★★

"THE LAST PULLMAN CAR", a film on the rise and decline of the Pullman company, is to be telecast on many Public Broadcasting stations between July 2 and 18, with schedules varying by locality.....

AMTRAK'S AUTO TRAIN will begin daily operation on Oct 15.....

AMTRAK EQUIPMENT DISPLAYS were being held on July 7 at Niagara Falls, July 14 at Depew, and Aug 4 at Albany, all in New York State.....

COLORADO AND NEW MEXICO have applied to Amtrak to begin a 403-b service running Denver-Pueblo–Alququerque, and on to either El Paso or Ft. Worth/Dallas. Amtrak said it would make an engineering test of the lines after Labor Day, and will look into the feasibility of the service (as it must by law).....

A TEST TRAIN was run by Amtrak on July 5 to Houston and Fort Worth over ex-Rock Island tracks, to test a possible re-routing of the SUNSET LIMITED.....

ALL EAGLE PASSENGERS were issued a travelers' advisory by NARP July 6: "This train is not operating reliably".....

THE DENVER HOTEL, famous Glenwood Springs hotel on the CZ route, was renamed the Grande Hotel in May. In Denver, the Oxford Hotel, two blocks from Denver Union Station, has been rehabilitated and is now more costly. It was formerly a low-price location favored by railfans on a budget..... ★★★

WORLD'S FAIR DAYLIGHT suffered a hazardous accident June 11on its return trip from New Orleans. West of Del Rio TX, near Lake Amistad on the Mexican border, a coupler key fell off, separating the engine from the train. Fortunately, the key did not land on the rails, where it could have caused a derailment. The steam loco ran ahead 3000 feet before it stopped. The 13 cars stopped automatically. Four hours were lost in making repairs on the scene, and the train reached Alpine TX 4½ hours late. Some days later, on the way to Klamath Falls OR, a bearing in the main driving rod of the engine failed, causing several hours' delay. The air conditioning did not work on that leg, according to reports.....

PLAY ON WORDS from George Gershwin's opera "Porgy and Bess" appears in a current Amtrak newspaper ad for the "All Aboard America" fare: "Summertime. And the leaving is easy on Amtrak" headlines the ad, which pictures an Amtrak system map split into the three fare regions. Why this advertising is necessary when the trains are full beats us, however. And speaking of the All Aboard America fares, the GULF COAST LIMITED is figured in both eastern and central zones for purposes of the fare.....

FIRST SEVEN MONTHS of Fiscal 1984 saw Amtrak ridership rise .6 million, train revenues go up about 19% and passenger miles per train mile rise 12%.....

THE SHAWNEE, Amtrak train 391, struck a roll of coiled steel that fell from an ICG piggyback freight train in Chicago near 91st Street on May 27. Damage to the Amtrak equipment was as follows: car 34000 $4000; 31020 $3000; 34070 $4000; 31032 $10,000; 35001 $6000; 34079 $3000; and 34059 $500. Amtrak coaches 34000, 31020 and 34070 were removed at Homewood, and the train was delayed about 5hrs, 40mins.....

AMTRAK BOARD MEETING of Jun 27 saw consideration of only one funding item: for application of dual brakes to Amfleet I cars.....

AMTRAK HAS JOINED with other corporations in an AT&T "Opportunity Calling" promotion of long distance telephone calls. By calling on AT&T one gains credits applicable to Amtrak tickets; example: save $75 on an adult full-fare of $200 -299 if you save up enough credits.....

News in this issue is updated thru July 7, 1984.

West Coast Report

CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR DEUKMEJIAN, in signing the budget Jun 27 for FY 85 which began Jul 1, cut $800 million in spending, leaving about $31 billion. Among the cuts was about $2 million that would have helped start up the San Francisco-Monterey DEL MONTE. Once more The Duke, whose disdain for the "exotic" travel mode lead him to kill the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, has caused a setback in the state's rail renaissance. Monterey officials and supporters were optimistic, however, that the startup will come eventually, and Sen. Henry Mello said he would put together some legislation for next year. There still remains $2.5 million for startup as unspent funds in the budget; the $2 million was for track upgrading.As if to show where the state's priorities lie now, the Caltrans press release of Jun 28 on the budget adoption go into great detail on all the highway spending but only mention in passing that "The mass transportation and aviation elements of the program amount to more than $651 million, although $2.5 billion of direct federal payments would also be used for local transit."

SAN DIEGO METROLINER in June averaged only 48 passengers northbound and 44 southbound. Patronage has shown no inclination to rise since the train's startup. The same Amtrak Marketing Department that foresaw only one quarter of the patronage the GULF COAST LIMITED is getting expected many more than this on the Metroliner. One wonders if this will be the last blunder that Graham Claytor will tolerate from his Marketing Department.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA has asked Amtrak for a second Bakersfield bus connection for SAN JOAQUINS 708 and 709, and also to connect to the L.A. Airport and Long Beach. The state wants an Aug 1 startup. Also, starting Aug 1 the 708 & 709 bus connections will make stops in Glendale.

THE SAN JOAQUINS this summer are running 4-car consists regularly, with six cars on some days.

ALL FLIGHTS BY Air California to South Lake Tahoe would be discontinued, according to a suit brought by the state Jun 27, until an environmental impact report is filed and approved. Excessive noise and pollution were charged.

VIRGINIA & TRUCKEE RAILROAD owner Robert C. Gray had to have SP steam engine 1251, which he purchased from the city of Stockton for $3301, hauled over the Sierra by truck Jul 6, via highway 88. The engine had been a problem for city park managers, provoking vandalism and injuries.

A YELLOW CARD, one for each station on the SAN JOAQUIN route, has been issued by Caltrans. The two-sided card gives a map of the station location, hours of service and telephone number, and a photo of Amtrak engine 341.

THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, train 5, arrived Oakland four hours late Jun 23, delayed 2 hours by flooding and 2 more hours because a D&RGW engine added at Denver would not be accepted by the UP at Salt Lake City.

SUMMER SLEEPER SPACE is all sold out on Western trains, and likely on most of the nation's long distance trains. Amtrak said that business is "excellent" this summer, as was expected. And Amtrak's equipment shortage still exists.

KELSO-LONGVIEW WA station lost its staffing and its baggage service July 1.

LOS ANGELES TIMES article of Jun 25, by David Smollar, points out the "balancing act" that American High Speed Rail must perform to get funding for the Bullet Train. It must seek large Japanese funding first in order to stimulate American funding, but the Japanese role must not be played up so much that the project appears to be Japanese rather than American. The next two months, it said, are crucial for AHSR in raising $50 million of U.S. money for engineering work.

WORLD'S FAIR AND RETURN (continued from page 14)

Lunch was grilled cheese, soup and carrot cake for $4, well-done and served quickly. Many passengers commented on how they hated the recent Wyoming detour, and were so happy to be riding thru the Rockies. The train chief said Wyoming upt the train in a state of depression!

There were further delays near Grand Junction as we sat 10mins waiting for no. 6, then ran thru a siding to get around a ballast train.

There was a lot of flood water near the roadbed, and D&RGW was obviously trying to protect their line, which did close in late May partly due to high water. While we sat, I conversed with a D&RGW passenger trainmaster, who noted there had been few complaints about dropping Rifle as a stop, and also Green River, from the schedule. Our stop at Grand Junction was from 3:50-3:55—the old ZEPHYR rest stop had been considerably shortened—crew change, inspection, water the diner and lounge, work passenger cars and baggage, and off we go only 5 mins late.

The sun returned for our crossing of the Utah moonscape after beautiful Ruby Canyon, and Thompson was reached at 5:15pm. The eastbound auto rack train off the SP was passed in the desert flats, and by the time we left Helper at 6:57 the sun was shimmering on the snowy Wasatch range.

(TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE)

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What's Doing at Beech Grove

Amtrak has completed a new track inspection car, numbered the 10,001. It was unveiled at Washington Union Station on Jun 26. The car was built from a wrecked Amfleet car, and reported carries more elaborate instrumentation than the car 10,000 does.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Of course, the business commuters have something to say about the [San Diego Metroliner] service. On a recent weekday, a group of San Diegians walking through Union Station were a little less than enthusiastic about service.

" 'We were only 15 minutes late, which means I'll only be 30 minutes late to my meeting,' said attorney Robert Wereshaw. 'The best thing about the trip was that there were fewer stops, the worst thing was that trains are never on time.' "

—Michael Bruce Abelson in Los Angeles Times, June 3.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"To facilitate travel between San Diego and Los Angeles, Amtrak has created a San Diegan Metroliner express service departing 7:30 am (except Sunday) and arriving in Los Angeles at 4 pm (except Saturday)."

—TravelAge West, July 2.

(Too slow; it'll never fly.)

CARS & CONSISTS

"Harrisburg Express", Newark-Allentown-Harrisburg-Newark via ex-LV, RDG, PRR, Jun 24: engines CR 5022 & 5029; cars (all NJ Transit)) 5414, 5340, 5427, 5411, 5436, 5349, 5348, 5315, 5343, 5342, 5426, 5323, 5329, 5321, 5450 (ex-NYC lounge), parlor car 1734 "Pennsylvania."

*"Carolina-Virginia Special", Greensboro NC to Roanoke VA, May 23: engine 611 N&W Class J; cars 1407 (tool & recording), 726 "William J. Purdie", SR 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, N&W 501, N&W 1069 "Missionary Ridge", SR 4061 "Queen and Crescent Club", SR 1081, 1086, 1087, SR 36, 1067, 1068, 3659, 1070 'W. Graham Claytor", 1056 "Lookout Mountain", N&W 531, N&W 536.

*CRESCENT, train 19, New Orleans Jun 28: engines 255, 326; cars 1159, 1624, 4634, 4637, 4642, 4733, 4737, 4640, 28010, 8519, 2051, 2440, 2430, 2233, 3103, 4000, 4624, 4701.

*GULF COAST LIMITED, train 24, New Orleans Jun 28: engine 718; cars 21175, 20013, 21229, 21150, 25047.

*PENNSYLVANIAN, train 47, Pittsburgh Jun 23: engine 272; cars 21104, 21202, 20015.

*SAN JOAQUIN, train 708, Oakland Jun 25: engine 240; cars 21217, 21233, 20048 Amcafe, 21186.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Jul 21-24: Independence Ltd '84, Alexandria VA-Detroit one way, steam loco 611, stopovers each night. 1st class obs car, railfan amenities. Various trip packages availablefor 4 days or less. CP Huntington RR Historical Soc, Inc., PO Box 1252, Ashland KY 41105-1252.

Jul 28 & 29: Fort Wayne Flyer, 611 steam excursions Detroit-Ft. Wayne RT. 1st cl service incl 3 meals in diner "Lake Mich." 611's Michigan debut. $17-$98. Ft. Wayne Flyer, Bluewater Michigan Chapter, PO Box 296R, Royal Oak MI 48068. 313-399-7963 evenings.

Aug 3-5: Discover London, Ont. Weekend. Kalamazoo-Battle Creek-E. Lansing-Flint-London RT on Atk & VIA. Park Lane hotel, sightseeing. Hot Air Balloon Festival. Dinner/theatre. America by Rail, 16168 Center Rd, East Lansing MI 48823. 517-339-8854.

Aug 9-15: Circle Tour to Toronto, Montreal, Upper NY State & Chicago. 4 major-league baseball games. Travel on Atk & VIA. Sightseeing, one night on train. $795 double occ. America by Rail, 16168 Center Rd, East Lansing MI 48823. 517-339-8854.

Aug 19: Farewell to the DL&W MU's. Hoboken-Montclair, Gladstone & Dover & return. Over 130mis ex-Lackawanna & Erie track, multiple photo stops, extra-fare parlor car with buffet lunch. Tri-State Railway Hist. Soc, Inc, PO Box 2243, Clifton NJ 07015. 857-2987.

Aug 26-Sep 2: Ontario Getaway & Polar Bear Express, from Mich. points via Atk, VIA and ON. 7 nights in 1st class hotels, sightseeing. $615 & up, double occ. America by Rail, 16168 Center Rd, East Lansing MI 48823. 517-339-8854.

Aug: NRHS Convention corrections (see full listing last issue): Aug 26 excursion operates to Indianapolis on B&O. Info telephone number is 513-896-5559. Write: 1984 NRHS Convention, Dept INFO, Box 36365, Cincinnati OH 45236.

Sep 1: Cape Cod Connection. Cape Cod from Boston via B&M & bus. ride Cape Cod & Hyannis RR, narrated cruise on Hyannis Harbor. Mystic Valley Rwy Society, PO Box 486, Hyde Park MA 02136. 617-361-4445.

Sep 2: Nutmeg Nautical. from Boston on Atk to New London, bus transfer, self-guided tour Coast Guard Academy; Groton Submarine Base, cruise Thames on "River Queen." Mystic Valley Rwy Society, PO Box 486, Hyde Park MY 02136. 617-361-4445.

Sep 15, 16, 22 & 23: NKP 765 Berkshire steam loco on C&NW Chicago-Sterling IL, Janesville WI and St. Francis WI (nr Milwaukee). 20th Century RR Club, 509 W. Roosevelt Rd, Chicago IL 60607. 312-829-5503.

Oct 6 & 13: Galena/Dubuque Ltd. Superliner special train from Chicago via ICG. 20th Century RR Club, 509 W. Roosevelt Rd, Chicago IL 60607. 312-829-4500 (hotline).

Send large SASE when responding to listings. One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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STAMFORD CT Aug 10-11 1984. Annual convention and show of the National Association of Timetable Collectors. Friday Aug 10: open to NAOTC members and registered dealers ONLY, Saturday Aug 11 open to the public from 9am to 3pm. Over 60 tables available to NAOTC Members and Railroad paper dealers ONLY. Complete details from Max Brunswick, Chairman, 155 West Rock Avenue, New Haven CT 06515. The location will be the modern Marriott Hotel, next to Amtrak/Metro North rail station in Stamford. Plan to attend America's largest paper-only show. Saturday admission $2 per person. The NAOTC Annual Convention is held in the Northeast only once every three years. Don't wait till 1987 to see this outstanding sale of rail, trolley, bus, air timetables, Employee Timetables, Guides, Postcards and all transportation paper.

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NOW SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN NOVEMBER: Volume 2 of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RAILROADS, THE SILVER AGE 1945-1960, including Bieber Line, SP Coast and Shasta Routes, NWP, branch and short lines, streamliners, Bay ferries and Oakland Pier, steam's last stand. Hardbound 8x11 album, about 220 pages, lavish use of color, many black-&-white, interpretive text. Tentative price, $45. Volume 1, covering electrics, older passenger trains, Valley, Sierra, desert, available now at $45 (old tariff underestimated color costs) from SUNDANCE PUBLICATIONS, 250 Broadway, Denver CO 80203.

FOR SALE: 350 wartime 1940's public timetables from big and little railroads. List for SASE. Bob McVay, 414 N. Mildred, King City, CA 93930.

Amtrak's FOIA compliance officer certified on March 2 that the board of directors is not routinely briefed on the current status and progress of the lawsuits Amtrak is involved in. The official minutes of board meetings confirm that "Litigation Matters" are not a routine item on the agenda. Both 45 U.S.C. 543 and D.C. Code Ann. sec. 29-916 place the authority for the management of Amtrak's business affairs in its board. What is the reason, then, for the Amtrak board's routine failure and neglect to supervise the litigation that Amtrak is involved in and taxpayers' money pays for? Alfred E. Ehm, 170 Carousel Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78227.

"Issues in American Rail Travel," RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & post. Full details given later in RTN. PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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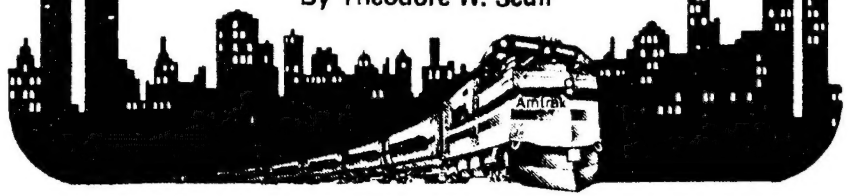
A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: RTN is in the throes of converting its subscriber lists to a computerized operation. This is another of the improvements we promised you recently. It will, when complete, result in much greater efficiency of our subscription fulfilment operation. Some subscribers will receive this issue with a computer-printed label for the first time. If you find errors on your label, please let us know. Because of this changeover, and also staff vacations, we are behind in updating labels with recent subscription renewals. Please bear with us. Thank you very much for your support.

EAST COAST REPORT

By Theodore W. Scull



NJ Transit said it expects to meet the Labor Day date set for the inaugural revenue runs over the re-electrified Morristown line. Its new, summer-only, weekend North Jersey Coast SHORE EXPRESS appears to be a success in attracting beach goers.

RTN reader Doug Bowen and I made the complete run to Bay Head Junction on Saturday, Jun 23, and the count out of Newark was 271 in four Comet I and II coaches. Most of the riders originated in Penn Station for the across-the-platform transfer to the diesel train at Newark. At least half the riders were young professionals.

We made good use of the $10 Special Excursion or Rail Buff Ticket, which allowed for unlimited trips for our inspection of five shore resorts–Bay Head, Point Pleasant Beach, Spring Lake, Belmar and Long Branch. Each one has its own flavor, and none of the beaches and boardwalks is more than a 15-min walk from the station.

Curiously, not one of the conductors encountered had ever seen one of these tickets, on sale since last fall. All the diesel-hauled trains were Comet-equipped, clean and on time. In the luggage racks on the way back were balloons, Kewpie dolls and hanging plants, and in the seats were many sunburnt passengers, including this writer.

★★★

SEPTA expects to open the Center City tunnel to the public on Labor Day, and the Delaware Valley ARP reported that the new service patterns have already been established. Most trains will run between endpoints thru Suburban Station, as SEPTA is calling Penn Center again.

SEPTA has published a monumental street and transit map for Philadelphia and surrounding communities. The detailed 3ft by 3ft-9in map may be ordered for $2.30 from SEPTA Map, c/o SEPTA Customer Services, 841 Chestnut St, Philadelphia PA 19107. Locally, the maps are available for $1.50. A free, simplified version for Center City only is available.

★★★

The Long Island Rail Road's deluxe tour program brochure is now available from the LIRR Tour Dept, Jamaica NY 11435. Featured are day trips using train and chartered bus to the Hamptons and Montauk Point and to Greenport, Shelter Island and Sag Harbor, and overnight trips to the new Garden City Hotel.

New York's Westway hearings, spread over two days onJun 26-27 from early morning to late at night, heard the testimony of some 208 speakers, of whom 162 opposed the project, including RTN reader Doug Bowen. Col. Fletcher H. Griffs, Jr., district engineer for the Army Corps of Engineers, will make the final decision by Oct 25 on the crucial permit to dredge and fill the Hudson River.

★★★

On Jun 29 it was announced that New York Governor Mario Cuomo and the state legislative leadership had agreed on a plan for elevators for the disabled and elderly to be installed in 50 subway stations undergoing modernization. It would provide $5 million over eight years for subway access, equip 65% of the city's buses with wheelchair lifts, and start a $5 million-per-year experimental paratransit program. If the MTA Board approves, let's hope this ends the squabble.

Grumman, in a New York Times ad, pointed out "that outside New York City, 70 privately and publicly owned bus lines have operated their Grumman 870 buses approximately 360 million miles." Within the city in the last week, private lines clocked 98,000 miles. The ad claimed the TRansit Authority is the only operator that could not run the buses safely. ★★★

RTN reader Chuck Treuhold reported in mid-June that Amtrak engine 343, hauling the southbound ADIRONDACK, ran out of fuel at Crown Point, between Port Henry and Fort Ticonderoga. A local fuel truck filled the tank, and the train arrived in Grand Central two hours late. Reader David Shields, traveling on the CARDINAL from Washington to Charleston Jun 20, said the train had exhausted all food items except breakfasts by 5:30pm. He had Belgian waffles for dinner, and reported that the limited dining and lounge service was in a state of chaos and the car filled with cigarette smoke. ★★★

At the first New York City meeting of the Empire State Passengers Ass'n, ESPA President Frank Barry urged members to write their state legislators for funding for the West Side connection into Penn Station. Without the $17-26 million state money, the federal funding will no longer be available.

The President of the 42nd Street Development Corp., Frederic Papert, made his case for a $50 million, privately-funded light rail line in a reserved transitway along 42nd Street from river to river. He said the trolley would be the "most merchandisable, attractive and theatrical way" to serve the revitalized street and the new Convention Center. The trolley is also "less labor-intensive, cleaner and quieter than the bus" and that "17 trolleys would replace 52 crosstown buses." However, he added, unless the mayor was for it, the project would not fly, and he felt another six months must pass before there would be any real go or no-go decision.

William Tucci, Amtrak Director for Route Development, discussed the Empire Service Corridor, saying that while People Express has devastated the western end of the route, passenger traffic was up 15% over last year, with most of the growth coming on the stretch between Grand Central and Schenectady, where Amtrak has 25% of the market share, including all modes. More Turbo sets will be refurbished and rebuilt to increase fuel efficiency. Running times on this segment will have to be increased because of the poor 40% on-time performance, largely the result of MTA dispatching. He said that incentive payments may be required to spur MTA performance. If the line gains access to Penn Station, Amtrak will not consider Grand Central for additonal trains. He admitted that some business would be lost, but that much more would be gained when the switch is made. He said that there was no possibility that dropping the fares would allow Amtrak to compete with People Express in the markets they share. People Express' costs per seat mile are six cents, compared with Amtrak's 14 cents. To improve this situation, he looked for Amtrak taking over the train and engine crews from Conrail before that company is sold. Incentive fares would soon be established to capture some of the car market for stations between Albany and Niagara Falls. Air fares are presently out of sight.

Tucci said that in the future Amtrak may establish a satellite station on Long Island, but an overnight train to Buffalo and Toronto and an extension of a day train to Cleveland were both on the back burner. The Tarrytown stop issue was dormant, as Amtrak had an agreement with the MTA to use Croton-Harmon and Poughkeepsie only. ★★★

The day's activities concluded with a muddy tour of the Long Island Rail Road storage yard construction site west of Penn Station and the partly-completed Amtrak tunnel connection. The LIRR will be able to store 300 cars, wash them and do minor repairs when the project is completed near mid-1986. When enthusiasm to go on with the tour waned, RTN reader Kevin Gregoire called for "more", and urged us on to the bitter end. It was worth it.

Rain washed out a section of the LIRR's Port Washington Branch east of Bayside. Passengers were advised to drive to Shea Stadium and take the train from there. Their parking fees would be refunded by the LIRR upon presentation of receipts. Subway lines flooded on the weekend of Jun 30, but were back to normal Monday morning.

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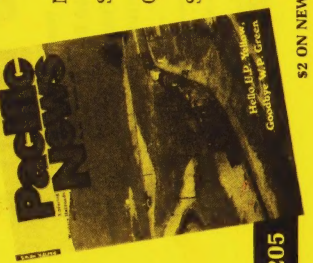

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